SUPPLEMENT :

PREMIER PHAM VAN DONG'S

SPEECH

AT NATIONAL DAY MEETING

(Full text)

VIETNAM COURIER

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South Viet Nam A MONTH OF OFFENSIVES IN COMMEMORATION OF THE AUGUST REVOLUTION

P.L.A.F. VIOLENT ATTACKS ON ALL FRONTS

Heavy Enemy Losses in Tay Ninh, Quang Nam, Da Nang and Mekong Delta.

Stepped-Up Activities of Regional Forces and Guerillas in All Sectors.

IN AUGUST THE P.L.A.F.

- ★ **Attacked the Enemy in 30 Towns and Provincial Capitals, Over 100 Urban Centres, District Capitals or Military Sub-Sector C.P.s and About 30 Airfields.**
- ★ **Killed, Wounded or Captured 62,000 Enemy Troops Including 20,000 G.I.s and Satellite Soldiers.**
- ★ **Wiped Out or Decimated 1 Enemy Regiment, 24 Battalions and 95 Companies.**
- ★ **Destroyed, Burnt, Downed, Sank or Seriously Damaged Over 1,000 Military Vehicles Including 800 Tanks and Armoured Cars, Hundreds of Planes and Helicopters, Over 100 Cannons and Mortars, About 100 War Vessels and 25 Depots.**

P.L.A.F. SPECIAL COMMUNIQUE No 9
(See details and analysis of these successes in our next issue)

The August Revolution and the Founding of the D.R.V.N. Herald a New Era in the Vietnamese Nation's Life

A grand meeting was held in a liberated area of South Viet Nam by the C.C. of the South Viet Nam N.F.L. to commemorate the 23rd anniversary of the August Revolution (Aug. 19, 1945) and the National Day of the D.R.V.N. (Sept. 2, 1945), *Giai Phong* Press Agency reported.

At the meeting Lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho read an appeal by the Front's C.C. The appeal made clear the significance of the August Revolution and the founding of the D.R.V.N. :

"These days 23 years ago, our compatriots in the whole country rose up in a general insurrection and overthrew the century-old domination imposed by the French colonialists in collusion with the feudal forces. On September 2, 1945 our entire people listened attentively to the Declaration of Independence full of pride, confidence and fighting will read by President Ho Chi Minh, the nation's beloved leader.

"The triumph of the August Revolution and the founding of the D.R.V.N. have ushered in a new era in the life of our nation : from slaves in a foreign-dominated country subjected to all the humiliations of servitude, our people have become masters of an independent country and of their own destinies and have built a genuinely democratic people's state for the defence of national independence and the building of a new life."

The appeal then recalled the process of the Vietnamese people's struggle in defence of their revolutionary gains and laid particular stress on the recent successes obtained by the South Vietnamese people in the anti-U.S. war of Resistance for national salvation.

The appeal said, "That was the victory of the spirit of the August Revolution, of the force of unity and the staunch and indomitable will of all our fellow-countrymen and combatants, of the 'nothing is more precious than independence and freedom' axiom which has been grasped thoroughly and turned into an invincible material strength. That was

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Up to Sept. 3, 1968

3,139

U.S. aircraft were downed in North Viet Nam

Electioneering in U.S.A.

Johnson's Beaten Track

THREE hours of hectic debates interrupted by "End the war" shouts and clashes between demonstrators and 26,000 policemen and soldiers outside the meeting hall, were the highlights of the Democratic Party Convention held on August 28 last in Chicago where a platform dealing with Viet Nam in the four years to come was endorsed by a 1567-1041 vote.

This policy was remarkable in that it contained nothing new compared with the present Johnsonian line.

Indeed, it only paid lip service to the pressure of public opinion by stressing the necessity to put an end to the unpopular war so detrimental to the interests of the American nation and the bulk of its citizens. But when it came to brasstacks about the restoration of peace, the platform-makers' true intentions became transparent.

The starting point of their reasoning was the same as Mr Johnson's. It was the trumped-up story of "aggression of Viet Nam by the Vietnamese," the theory of "commitments" of the U.S. and its "limited goals" in Viet Nam. Every one, however, including more sober members of the two great American parties, is aware that the aggressors of Viet Nam is no other else than the U.S. imperialists who have flouted the 1954 Geneva Agreements, created a puppet administration in their pay and dispatched over half a million G.I.s to force neo-colonialism on South Viet Nam.

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Liberation fighters in pursuit of the enemy

PARIS TALKS' 20th SESSION

THE 20th session of the D.R.V.N.-U.S. official conversations in Paris took place on September 4. Taking the floor first, U.S. representative A. Harriman repeated the thread-bare allegations that North Viet Nam was committing aggression against South Viet Nam, that the Saigon administration had requested U.S. assistance and that the presence of the U.S. expeditionary troops in South Viet Nam was "legal." He tried once again to justify U.S. refusal to end unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war on the whole territory of the D.R.V.N., and again insisted on a "response", that is, "reciprocity," from the latter.

Speaking next, D.R.V.N. Minister of State Xuan Thuy strongly denounced the U.S. ruling circles' continued aggression and neo-colonialism in Viet Nam. He flayed the Viet Nam of 79 sices the platforms of the U.S. Republican and Democratic Parties and President Johnson's August 31 statement.

The platform of the Republican Party, Mr Xuan Thuy pointed out, stated that "liberation wars" are intolerable, and advocated a gradual de-Americanization of the war of aggression in South Viet Nam, and called for help to the South Vietnamese people to "assume increasing responsibilities." This means in fact that the U.S. will continue its efforts to defeat the Vietnamese people's liberation war, to bolster up the Saigon puppet army and administration and use them as tools to realize U.S. neo-colonialism and to play off Vietnamese against Vietnamese in a more thorough manner.

The platform of the Democratic Party favoured U.S. stepped-up training and equipping the South Viet Nam puppet army so as to reduce the involvement of American troops, and a halt to the bombing only when this did not threaten the lives of American troops and after a response from Hanoi. This means that the U.S. will pursue its aggressive war with more puppet troops, and keep demanding "reciprocity" and refusing to end completely and unconditionally its bombing of the D.R.V.N.

The D.R.V.N. chief negotiator recalled that Mr. Nixon, presidential candidate of the Republican Party, had always clamoured for escalation of the war to the highest rung, while Mr Humphrey, candidate of the Democratic Party, had been for 4 years associated with President Johnson's policy of aggression.

He warned that anyone who was to be the next U.S. President and did not solve correctly the Viet Nam issue on the basis of respect for the fundamental national rights that the U.S. will continue its efforts in accordance with the American people's aspiration for peace, would inevitably fail.

Highlighting the American people's growing opposition to the U.S. policy of aggression and war in Viet Nam which completely runs counter to their interests and aspirations, Mr Xuan Thuy recalled the recent mass demonstrations held under the slogans "No, no, no, we won't go!", "Get our troops out of Viet Nam now!" right in Chicago while the Democratic Party was holding its National Convention. He also mentioned the petitions from many American lawyers, social activists and prominent personalities to the U.S. government and Congress and to the Democratic Party Platform Committee, to protest the disastrous U.S. policy on Viet Nam. He severely condemned the U.S. rulers' savage repression against demonstrators in Chicago.

The D.R.V.N. representative declared: "The Viet Nam problem can be settled only on the basis of real respect for the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights." He pointed out that the Vietnamese people's stand for independence and peace found a full expression in the four points of the D.R.V.N. Government and the Political Programme of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation.

He quoted this passage from Premier Pham Van Dong's speech at the commemorative meeting on the occasion of Viet Nam's 23rd National Day (September 2) in Hanoi:

"In Paris, we are insisting on a very legitimate and well-founded demand which will have a positive effect on the gradual achievement of a political settlement for the Viet Nam problem, that is U.S. unconditional ending of its bombing raids and all other acts of war on the whole territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam... As the United States has brazenly invaded our country, it must, as an immediate step toward the settlement of the war, meet the legitimate demand of the D.R.V.N., namely to stop unconditionally its bombing raids and all other acts of war on the whole territory of the D.R.V.N., it must withdraw all U.S. and satellite troops from South Viet Nam, recognize the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and enter into negotiations with the Front on problems of concern for the two sides in South Viet Nam."

In conclusion, Mr. Xuan Thuy said: "The longer the U.S. government pursues its war of aggression in Viet Nam, the farther it penetrates into an issueless tunnel. It is now time that the U.S. government should take a realistic view to stop immediately and unconditionally the bombings and all other acts of war on the whole territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, so that discussions of other questions of interest to both parties can be held and the way can be opened to a sensible settlement of the Viet Nam problem, in the interests of both sides, Viet Nam and the U.S., as well as of world peace."

Johnson's Beaten Track

(Continued from page 1)

Basing themselves on these utterly false grounds, the politicians of the Democratic Party put forth solutions already sealed to failure because they included none of the three following imperatives:

— Unconditional cessation of the bombing of the D.R.V.N.

— Withdrawal of U.S. and satellite troops from South Viet Nam.

— Recognition of, and negotiations with, the South Viet Nam N.F.L., the genuine representative of the 14 million people of South Viet Nam.

Regarding these key points, the Convention of the Democratic Party only harped on the same string as Mr. Johnson.

It declared its readiness to stop all bombings of North Viet Nam when "this action would not endanger the lives of our troops in the field" and on condition that it "should take into account the response from Hanoi." This was a watered-down form of the same old "reciprocity" lest motin initiated at San Antonio which has been Mr Harriman's stock-in-trade in the Paris talks and firmly rejected by the D.R.V.N. representative.

The Platform of the Democratic Party suggested "negotiations with Hanoi" and not with the N.F.L. regarding the withdrawal from South Viet Nam of U.S. and satellite troops as well as of troops from the North: the formula is strongly reminiscent of the Manila communiqué and one wonders when the Democratic Party will finish with this game, to seriously strike the peace path.

The Platform advocated in vague terms the formation in South Viet Nam of a post-war government through "elections open to all major political factions" as an important component of "an honourable and lasting settlement which respects the rights of all the people of Viet Nam." This was but phraseology which hardly concealed an intention to impose on the South Vietnamese people the presence of pro-U.S. guislings! The cloven foot was only too obvious as the Chicago document all along ignored the existence of the South Viet Nam N.F.L. Add to all that the support given to Mr Johnson's "repeated offer to provide a substantial U.S. contribution to the post-war reconstruction of South Viet Nam as well as to the economic development of the entire region, including North Viet Nam" and you will have a complete picture of neo-colonialism which the big wigs in the Democratic Party hoped to prolong in South Viet Nam under one form or another. How ironical was the following statement found in the same document: "We want no bases in South Viet Nam, no continued military presence and no political role in Vietnamese affairs."

Thus, while talking peace like Mr Johnson, the Democratic Party convention wanted, as did Mr Johnson, to achieve this peace from a position of strength. How, under these circumstances, can one give them credence when they said they considered the cessation of the war their "most urgent task"? As a matter of fact, stress was laid on war efforts, but here also, the Chicago convention was unable to find a more dramatic solution than the so-called Vietnamisation of the war in Viet Nam. To refurbish the puppet army and administration and use them as tools for neo-colonialism, to proclaim aloud this policy as a means to placate U.S. public opinion alarmed by the ever lengthening list of American casualties, such a manoeuvre does not in the least mean that the leaders of the Democratic Party are so gullible as to believe in the possibility of reviving the Saigon army already thrashed to pieces by the South Viet Nam people's forces since February last.

As may be seen, the Democratic Party's Viet Nam policy was sliding back into the old track of the Johnson administration. Besides, the man who was appointed to implement it was no other else than Mr Humphrey, "carbon copy" of the present White House boss.

If one refers to the Political Program recently adopted by the Republican Party Convention, one is struck by the similarity of views held by the American ruling circles: the same refusal to unconditionally stop the bombing of the D.R.V.N., to withdraw U.S. and satellite troops from South Viet Nam, to negotiate with the N.F.L. and to let the Vietnamese settle themselves their own affairs without foreign interference, similar obstinacy to pursue the war of aggression against the Vietnamese people under the cover of a supposed increased responsibility of the Saigon puppets; the same peace gimmick, a "Pax Americana" gimmick.

Has the America of the trusts and Big Business not learnt anything from the lessons of life? Hasn't it seen wreckage of the chariot of aggression piling up on Johnson's beaten track? Has it not been aware of the harm done by the Viet Nam adventure to the political, social and economic life in the U.S and to American prestige in the world? Does it turn a deaf ear to the storm of protest rising everywhere from all strata of the American society, even from the ranks of both the Democratic Party and Republican Party?

It is up to the American oligarchy, and only to it, to think out its future plans of action. As for the Vietnamese people, it matters little to them whether the Democratic Party or the Republican Party, whether Mr Johnson, Mr Humphrey or Mr Nixon sits in the White House. Their mind has been made up and they are resolved to go the whole hog: to fight on and recover independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity for their country.

The August Revolution...

(Continued from page 1)

the victory of the heroic Vietnamese people as a whole who, from North to South, are of one mind and fighting shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy. That was also the victory of the sympathy and invaluable support and assistance given us by brothers and friends in all 5 continents."

"Our goals are," the appeal reaffirmed, "independence, democracy, peace, neutrality and prosperity for South Viet Nam and ultimate reunification of the Fatherland by peaceful methods."

"Our position is: since the U.S. continues its aggression against South Viet Nam, we are resolved to fight on until victory."

Finally, the appeal voiced the following pledge of the 14 million South Vietnamese people to people throughout the country, to all oppressed people and to the whole of progressive mankind who are encouraging them: "Whatever hardships and sacrifices we may still have to endure, we are determined to thoroughly accomplish our duty towards our nation, and towards our brothers and friends in all 5 continents."

ANOTHER meeting was held by the C.C. of the Viet Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces at a point near Saigon Cholon to honour the anniversary of the August Revolution.

Taking the floor at the meeting, Prof. Duong Ky, the Alliance's Secretary-General, dealt with the bearing of the August Revolution on the present anti-U.S. fight for national salvation.

"The August Revolution," he said, "was a revolution carried out by a whole nation to regain the country's independence. It was a revolution jointly carried out by all social strata, circles and classes, involving workers, peasants, intellectuals, petty bourgeois, civil servants and private firms employees, students, national capitalists, patriotic personalities, etc."

Prof. Duong Ky stressed, "The coming into existence and the present anti-U.S. activities for national salvation of the Viet Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces are the continuation and the enhancement of the tradition of national unity so upheld by the August Revolution. It is precisely in this spirit that the V.N.A.D.P.F. has worked out its line in its National Salvation Manifesto: "To unite all patriotic forces and individuals, to resolutely resist foreign aggression, to completely overthrow the Nguyen Van Thieu—Nguyen Cao Ky puppet regime, to set up a national coalition government, to achieve independence, democracy and peace."

TWENTY-THREE YEARS OF STRUGGLE AGAINST ILLITERACY AND FOR THE PEOPLE'S HIGHER CULTURAL STANDARD

TON DUC THANG

Vice-President of the D.R.V.N.

Chairman of the National Committee for Complementary Education and for the Elimination of Illiteracy

THE Vietnamese are by tradition very fond of learning. But, under French rule, because of the policy of obscurantism of the colonial and feudal regime, 95 per cent of the people were illiterate. Together with hunger and foreign domination, this scourge hindered our country's development.

"COMBAT ILLITERACY"—ONE OF D.R.V.N.'S FIRST THREE TASKS

THE Democratic Republic of Viet Nam was born after the victory of the 1945 August Revolution. Immediately after the proclamation of the country's independence, the Provisional Government, in its first meeting—set for the entire people three great tasks: "combat famine, wipe out illiteracy and resist foreign invasion." On September 8, 1945, President Ho Chi Minh signed a historic decree founding the Popular Education Board and calling on the entire people to get rid of illiteracy. He pointed out: "To firmly maintain national independence, to make our people strong and our country prosperous, every Vietnamese must be aware of his rights and obligations: without education, one cannot take part in the building of the country. First of all, one must know how to read and write the national language."

As President Ho Chi Minh's appeal fully met the deep aspirations of the masses, it triggered off a stirring mass movement which brought every illiterate to literacy classes. One year later to a day, the Popular Education Board took pride in announcing to the Vanguard Party, the Government and President Ho Chi Minh that 2.5 million people had been freed from illiteracy.

Shortly after, the national war of resistance against the French colonialists broke out. Carrying on their tradition of building the country while fighting the enemy, the entire Vietnamese people set to learn, considering this as a patriotic duty which would help speed up victory. Old folk and young people, men and women emulated one another in learning "Uncle Ho's script." Soldiers learnt even on the battlefield or in training camps. Young men and women, militiamen and militiawomen made it a point of putting into practice such slogans as "To go to school is to love one's country," "Only if you are able to read and write can you accelerate victory." In the countryside people said, "We go to school to learn how to produce more rice, maize, sweet potatoes and manioc." They learned at spare time and also while working, at noon and in the evening. They spelled out words written on the backs of water buffaloes, on the ground, or on bamboo posters put at the foot of trees, against walls, or hung over market gates. After a resistance war lasting 3,000 days, over 10 million people could read and write. With the return of peace, there were in North Viet Nam only 3 million illiterates left, between 12 and 50, most of them living in newly-liberated towns and areas and in mountain areas.

At the beginning of the period of economic and cultural rehabilitation, our government worked out a 3-year plan (1956-58) aimed at the basic elimination of illiteracy.

As this major undertaking required the participation of many branches, our government founded a "National Committee for Complementary Education and for the Elimination of Illiteracy" of which I was the head. We opened many crash courses for the training of teachers. The spreading drive brough forth a lot of innovations as regards the organization of schools and classes and methods of teaching and learning. Everybody learned with a deep sense of urgency: peasants read letters written on the bark of trees before going to the rice-fields, fishermen spelled out words written on conic hats while casting their nets, catholics went to church with books to attend school immediately after mass, workers set good examples by learning their lessons near their machines during breaks. Volunteers for the anti-illiteracy campaign worked at spare time and on Sundays and fully deserved the "Unsung Heroes" title awarded them by President Ho Chi Minh.

In 1958, the 3-year plan for the wiping out of illiteracy was successfully completed. The Popular Education Board was conferred a Second Class Labour Order by the government and the banner "Successful Elimination of Illiteracy" by the National Assembly. Nguyen Trung Thieu received the title of "Anti-Illiteracy Hero" for his many years of voluntary work, in which he helped 200 adults out of ignorance. In all the provinces of the delta and the midlands illiteracy was virtually eradicated: 95 per cent of the population, from illiterate in 1945, became literate. This brilliant achievement paved the way for the Vietnamese people to successfully carry out agricultural co-operation and technical, cultural and ideological revolution with a view to fulfilling the key task of the state, i.e. socialist industrialization.

Even in remote mountain areas, illiteracy has now been in the main stamped out.

COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION

ALONG with the campaign against illiteracy, complementary education was given top priority right in the first days of the resistance against the French colonialists. Complementary education schools of various types appeared in the 5th zone, in South Viet Nam. In 1949 "Labour General Education" schools were opened at central level and in many administrative zones. After the re-establishment of peace, "General Education Schools for Workers and Peasants" mushroomed. Thus knowledge was provided to able youths and combatants from worker and peasant stock to enable them to attend higher education and vocational schools and to become members of a new intelligentsia made up of technicians, scientific and managing cadres.

From 1959 onwards the complementary education movement, encouraged by the Party, the Government and President Ho Chi Minh, was given an unprecedented impulse for the benefit of millions of people and hundreds of thousands of grass-roots militants. On December 2, the Party Central Committee issued Resolution 93 which gave directives to strengthen the direction of complementary education with a view to pushing ahead socialist revolution in North Viet Nam and the struggle for re-unification. Two weeks later, President Ho Chi Minh sent a letter to anti-illiteracy workers, remembering them that "complementary education work is of prime importance." The resolutions of the 3rd Congress of the Party in 1960 ranked complementary education among the first tasks of education. The Party thus wanted to "prepare the ground for stepping up ideological and political education among the labouring people, training economic and cultural cadres on a large scale and promoting the dissemination of science and technique." Clear-cut objectives for complementary education until 1965 were defined in the Resolutions by the 5th and 8th Plenums of the Party and in the first 5-year plan.

In implementation of the first complementary education 5-year plan (June 1961—June 1966), public services, factories, construction sites, state farms, forestry enterprises, agricultural and handicraft co-operatives made complementary education work a task of prime importance to be carried out more and more satisfactorily (planning of studies, organization of schools and courses, appointment of teachers, salary scale, everything was to be improved day after day). As a result, the movement was better organized. It was all the more consolidated as the subjects taught closely linked with the Party's lines and policies, effectively served economy and life. Full time and spare time complementary courses of short duration for primary and elementary education, were started for grass-roots cadres in every province. In the mountain areas, many provinces opened schools of a new type for national minorities, in which the pupils gained knowledge and technique and learned agriculture and forestry, while carrying out production work and acquainting themselves with the management of agricultural co-operatives.

The teaching staff increased. Besides volunteers among co-op members, many of them were former pupils of the 7th-10th forms, workers, technicians and teachers from general education schools devoted part of their time to help dispense complementary education. In the present struggle against U.S. aggression, the complementary education branch can further boast a contingent of 5,000 professional teachers—picked up from the staffs of elementary schools who are helping the volunteers improve their teaching.

4 provinces, about 80 districts, cities, town districts, over 2,000 villages, townships and more than 10 public offices, factories, state farms, forestry enterprises fulfilled the 5-year plan for complementary education ahead of schedule. On the strength of this success, a new plan of shorter duration (2 years: June 1966—June 1968), more suitable to wartime, was worked out. It has been already completed by many provinces.

To meet the needs of wartime, women have had to assume important duties in production, the fighting and management. On the people's initiative, a new kind of complementary education school was especially created to teach our women, apart from general knowledge, the elements of agricultural technique and the management of cooperatives, so as to enable them to successfully participate in the 3 responsibilities* movement. Such schools exist now in more than 20 towns with a total enrolment of more than 90,000. Besides, 15,000 peasant girls are attending elementary schools (total number of pupils: 200,000). There are also 102 schools for national minorities with 8,000 pupils in the mountain areas (50% in elementary schools). In 1967-1968 3,000 people attended secondary schools for workers and peasants. Most of the grass-roots cadres in North Viet Nam, formerly illiterate or having had little education have now received primary and elementary education. In factories, the majority of workers have reached the standard of primary and elementary education. In a number of important factories in big cities and industrial centres, many young workers have graduated from secondary schools and are attending evening higher education courses.

In the delta countryside, the bulk of village and co-op cadres have finished primary education while many of them have attended elementary education complementary courses. A number of presidents of village administrative committees and secretaries of village Party cells (for instance Nguyen Anh Tuan at Quan Khe, Ha Hoa district, Vinh Phu province; Nguyen Viet and Truong Cong Quyen at Cam Binh, Cam Xuyen district, Ha Tinh province etc...) graduated from a secondary school. So did last year Nguyen Van Mach, 60, worker of the Yen Phu electric plant, who had been illiterate before the revolution.

Teachers at a primary school in Hai Hung province preparing school equipment for the new school-year.

We are proud that in North Viet Nam 1,200,000

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** Responsibilities in production, in family and in the fighting.*

QUANG BINH, *A Heroic Province*

Underground H.Q. of the Viet Nam Workers' Party branch at Q.L. village (Quang Trach district).

Having virtually no industry formerly, the province has built twenty industrial enterprises in the last three years.
Photo : *An engineering workshop in a mountain cave.*

QUANG BINH, near the 17th parallel, is one of the provinces hardest hit by the U.S. Air Force and Navy.

Up to September 2, 1968, that province, with a less than 9,000 square kilometres area and an about 400,000 population, downed 530 U.S. planes. It also distinguishes itself in the communication and transport battle, in production and other activities.

(*Photos* : **Minh Truong** and **Huu Minh**)

Over these last three years, Quang Binh has harvested five good crops.

To keep traffic goirg is a primordial task of Quang Binh inhabitants.
Photo : *Filling a bomb crater.*

Many schoolchildren volunteer to "watch the sky."
Photo : *Ta Quang Ty, 14, a 5th former, on sentry duty near a bomb shell serving to sound air alerts.*

The 300th U.S. plane lost in North Viet Nam was downed by Quang Binh.

Tran Thi Ly, 20, people's militia heroine, maintains liaison on an arm of the river which is a fat target for U.S. planes and war vessels.

The medical network spreads to villages and agricultural co-operative.
Photo : *An underground operating room.*

Their duty- over, tired, these militia girls hasten to have a look at To Huu's selection of poems they have just received.

One out of four people goes to school.
Photo : *Future masters of the country.*

This strip of land they tread this sea splashing at their feet and this azure vault of heaven belong to them and shall be theirs for ever.

Why We Volunteers Oppose the War?

Editor's Note.— We reprint below large excerpts from a position Paper on Viet Nam, issued by the (U.S.) Committee of Returned Volunteers. It was initially endorsed by over 650 Americans who had participated in what is called overseas voluntary service program—such as university-sponsored teaching programs, church missionary agencies, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the Peace Corps. It is being circulated to wider circles of returned volunteers in the United States.

OUR EXPERIENCE AS VOLUNTEERS

WE are United States citizens who have lived and worked abroad. We went to the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America because we wanted to offer the insights and techniques of the West to those whose societies are just beginning to industrialize. We chose to work in programs like the Peace Corps because we thought that through such channels we could support the forces of constructive change.

Although in most instances we went in order to serve, we found that we had more to learn than to teach, more to receive than to give. We began to understand the difficulties, economic, social, political and emotional—which people face in building a nation in the 20th century. We felt the aspirations and frustrations of people caught up in the process of development. We saw the potential of people breaking out of the apathy imposed by centuries of poverty and serfdom and rising to the task of development.

We became increasingly aware of the irrelevance of Cold War ideology to the problems of the developing non-Western world. As we learned to understand the societies of those different from us, we began to be able to view our own societies from the perspective of others. We came to see the inadequacies in the actions and goals of our own government. As part of the process we began to realize that there are ambiguities inherent in United States - sponsored programs like the Peace Corps. Although its name indicates a goal of serving the forces of peaceful change, we wonder whether the Peace Corps' effect has not at times been to impede rather than accelerate the movement into a future of greater abundance and full political participation. We have returned to the U.S. committed to working towards changing those policies and actions of our government which we think serve only a narrowly - defined national interest and ideology.

WHY WE OPPOSE THE WAR

WE now find our Nation increasingly involved in a conflict which threatens to make impossible the attainment of those goals towards which we worked overseas. Not only do we see the destructive effects of this involvement in Viet Nam, we also see a growing tendency of our government to set in similar ways all around the world. We find the United States increasingly prone to respond with military force to efforts by the poor in Asia, Africa, and Latin America to better their conditions. An example is U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965. Our government is devoting an increasing amount of our national budget to defense rather than to development. Instead of supporting desperately needed changes, our great wealth and power is used to stifle change and maintain the established order — thereby creating "other Vietnams."

It has often been said that those who serve abroad will make their most important contribution when they return, by helping the United States understand other nations.

It is on the basis of our experience overseas, our perceptions about the lives and aspirations of other peoples, our hopes for the future of the world and our nation's place in it, that we now speak. We declare our opposition to the war in Viet Nam for the following reasons:

1. We oppose the war in Viet Nam because it destroys in one developing country what we have worked to build in so many other developing countries.

The increasing destruction wrought by United States forces in Viet Nam reveals a basic contradiction in our nation's policies overseas, a contradiction between that which builds up and that which destroys. For those of us who worked to build a school or dispensary, for those of us who saw dysentry decrease because we helped the people dig a well, for those of us who helped a village realize its ambition to have a bridge to get its goods to market, for those of us who helped a child discover the meaning of electricity, each bomb in Viet Nam that destroys a school, a well, a bridge or a child destroys the very kinds of things which we considered most important in our service as volunteers.

We are therefore led to question whether the United States really values the goals toward which we worked while overseas. We who served overseas did so in part because we wanted to construct, not only schools and roads and sanitation systems, but also dialogue among men of differing cultures. Each bomb that we drop, each villager whom we kill, increases the hatred of Asians for the American intruders. Rather than opening up communication, our actions in Viet Nam leave us with a legacy of bitterness, the burden of which we must carry into the future.

2. We oppose the war in Viet Nam because it prevents the development of indigenous leadership responsive to the needs and desires of the people.

Those of us who have worked in community development have learned that for a project to succeed the people themselves must feel a need for something and must organize themselves to get it. Through the presence in Viet Nam, the United States government maintains in power those who rather than being responsive to the needs and desires of Vietnamese people, are primarily committed to retaining their own privileged position. There need be little surprise that such leaders seek to continue and extend United States involvement in their country. Thus, neither is the national leadership supported, nor in the ways people are dealt with on a local level, does our government move towards the goal of indigenous responsibility for development.

3. We oppose the war in Viet Nam because we believe it undermines the democratic ideals for which we worked abroad, and which we uphold within the United States.

In Viet Nam the United States identifies itself with the interests of a small power elite of military leaders and landlords who refuse to allow other segments of Vietnamese society to participate in political decision-making and in the benefits of economic growth. As a result, our policy contributes far more to oppression than to liberation and the growth of democracy.

The war also undermines democratic traditions within the United States. There is a growing tendency to consider dissent unpatriotic and, from some corners, even to call it treason. We are concerned that, as the war continues, dissent will be more overtly suppressed, either by intimidating those who speak in open opposition, or by attempting to discredit them. Moreover, the distance between official proclamations and what is actually happening steadily widens. As we escalate further, it becomes more and more evident that our goal is military victory, and that our professed interest in peace talks is merely perfunctory. Thus as our government masks the truth and at the same time works to discredit its opponents, our traditional ideal become only empty words.

4. We oppose the war in Viet Nam because we believe that the anti-communist rhetoric used to justify our actions there obscures the fact that the basic division in the world today is between rich and poor.

We discovered during our time abroad that the issues in developing countries centre on the struggle against injustice, hunger, ignorance, and disease, whether these stem from a colonial heritage or from an indigenous feudal tradition. The assumptions about a world-wide communist conspiracy which marked our responses to Eastern Europe two decades ago are irrelevant to our relations with developing, non-industrialized nations. The movements for rapid change in these areas, whether revolutionary or peaceful, are essentially nationalistic. Although often branded "communist" by their opponents, most of these movements seek to bring into being rights and conditions similar to those that have long been integral to life in the United States.

For the developing countries the issue is not one of military containment of communism. That the problem is not primarily a military one is starkly illustrated by estimates that in Viet Nam anywhere from two to ten civilians are killed for every combatant*. The dominant question, both in Viet Nam and in the test of the developing world, is not containment of communism, but rather whether the poor and subservient will always be poor and subservient, or whether they will find ways to become full participants in their societies.

5. We oppose the war in Viet Nam because it renders difficult, if not impossible, domestic efforts to eliminate poverty and to assure the civil rights of all United States citizens.

The existence of injustice within the United States, especially racial discrimination, was perhaps our greatest burden while we were outside the country. People constantly asked about the racial situation here, and until the mid-60s we could respond that things were changing, that progress was being made. However, the priority once given to the struggle for civil rights now seems to have been forgotten, as national energies are increasingly consumed by the war in Viet Nam.

While we worked abroad we felt that we were contributing to building up other societies. We returned with the desire to help build up our own, particularly by participating in the efforts to eliminate poverty in the United States. We are now finding, however, that there are fewer and fewer resources available for this struggle. The bombs which fall on homes and schools and bridges in Viet Nam are bought with money that could be spent for education, housing, health facilities, and countless other needs of the people who live in sub-strata of this society.

Thus we find ourselves re-evaluating some of the anti-American charges we faced while we were abroad. The growing priority within the United States for military expenditure leads us to wonder whether these charges were perhaps not correct—that the government of the United States is not only committed to imposing its values and will on people around the globe, but it also makes little effort to put into practice at home the ideals it upholds in its rhetoric abroad.

6. We oppose the war in Viet Nam because, in spite of assurances to the contrary, our actions daily bring us closer to an all-out war with China or Russia or both.

Therefore: As we become aware of the factors which underlie this war, and the reasons for our opposition to it, it becomes increasingly clear to us that United States intervention in Viet Nam cannot be justified. It becomes more and more obvious every day that there will be no lasting solution to the problems of Viet Nam so long as American troops are fighting there. Therefore we call for their withdrawal.

To admit that we have made a tragic mistake will require great courage. Nevertheless, we believe that U.S. withdrawal at this point, rather than undermining the honor of this nation, on the contrary will be a sign of its strength and health.

In all probability withdrawal will mean the collapse of those whom the United States supports in position of power in South Viet Nam. However, even if this should be the case, we are convinced that a more viable Viet Nam will emerge.

Withdrawal may well also mean that the Viet Cong will become the dominant elements in Vietnamese political life after the departure of American troops. We wish to say several things about this possibility. *First*, by siding Diem's rise to power and by supporting his unrepresentative and suppressive government, the United States contributed much to the rise of the N.L.F. *Second*, it seems clear that the N.L.F. is authentically representative of a broad segment of South Vietnamese society. *Third*, should communist members of the N.L.F. become inordinately powerful in any successor government in South Viet Nam, it is for the South Vietnamese to decide when that point has been reached and how to deal with it. This cannot be decided by non-Vietnamese, no matter how professional. *Fourth*, should the successor government decide to reunify with North Viet Nam, that is their decision—as are the terms on which reunification might take place. *Fifth*, should violence occur in Viet Nam after our withdrawal, let us not be hypocritical about it: it is unimaginable that it could equal the violence we now bring to that nation under the rationale of a commitment to a minority which knowingly gambled on our protection of their interests.

* *London Observer*, January 7, 1967; *The New Republic*, January 7, 1967; *Associated Press*, October 24, 1966.

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"Anti-Yankee belt" set up by the guerillas and regional troops.

Tropical Lightning *began operating in January 1968, with Para Brigade 173 and units of the* Big Red One *(First Infantry Division) as reinforcements and supported by 150 ordnance pieces, 350 tanks and armoured cars as well as hundreds of planes and helicopters. Its target — six villages south of Cu Chi district — was quite modest compared with the formidable means deployed: in fact for the first operation of such a much-vaunted unit, the U.S. command wanted to secure a maximum success. However in a region that has a century-old tradition and experience in struggle—mostly armed struggle — against colonialism, the famous division was thoroughly baffled by a guerilla tactics and technique not taught in any classical military "text-book." As a result, it suffered thousands of casualties without even being able to ease the pressure of guerilla warfare. Its troops' morale thus received a staggering blow right at the start.*

Three months later, it scored another setback: 700 men put out of action and about one hundred armoured cars destroyed. In July, it lost 800 men and 60 vehicles in a P.L.A.F. attack against Dong Du where it was licking its wounds.

Tropical Lightning Division's Tribulations in the Tropics

NO RESPITE FOR THE AGGRESSORS

AFTER reduced activity in the second half of 1966, Tropical Lightning *was seen taking part, since February 1967, in a series of operations which were part of the ill-fated second dry-season counter - offensive. Infantry Division 25 took nearly 1,700 casualties in Operation* Gadsden *mounted from February 2 to 21 in the northwest of Tay Ninh province. Then in the famous Operation* Junction City *which ended in the same province with 13,500 casualties and a loss of 1,000 vehicles for the aggressors, the same division also suffered heavy losses.*

Meanwhile, around Dong Du, the regional troops of Cu Chi district wiped out 3 companies (including one motorized) of Division 25 which lost furthermore 70 military vehicles in two battles in June and July.

Thus, as UPI *remarked on November 6, 1967, the first two years of* Tropical Lightning *in Viet Nam ended most tragically.*

In the Winter 1967—Spring 1968 campaign, Westmoreland moved Division 25 to the northeast of Tay Ninh province near Ca Tum and threw it into Operation Yellow Stone *near the Cambodian frontier. Caught napping by the P.L.A.F. generalized offensive in Lunar New Year, it hurriedly gave up the operation to dig in in three main bases: Dong Du, Trang Lon (5 km northwest of Tay Ninh) and Dau Tieng (35 km northwest of Dong Du).*

However, Division 25 was not given any respite: on the night of January 31, 800 of its troops were put out of action and 70 choppers destroyed in a P.L.A.F. artillery shelling against Dong Du, where it had just mustered its forces. In February, it lost 4,500 men in an engagement north-northwest of Saigon and had one battalion entirely wiped out in Cu Chi district.

With the stepping up of P.L.A.F. attacks in May, the losses of the Division were on the ascent: from May 13 to 25, many of its armoured car parks at Cu Chi and Trang Bang were assaulted: 300 vehicles destroyed or damaged. Other bases at Dau Tieng, Trang Lang, etc. were also hit. On the night of May 8, at My Thanh, 18 km northwest of Saigon, one of its armoured squadrons of 96 vehicles (including 27 tanks and armoured cars) was wiped out and 300 G.I.s put out of action.

To sum up, in 6 months of generalized offensives and concerted uprisings in South Viet Nam, Infantry Division 25 lost 13,000 men killed, wounded or captured. This loss in lives (equal to a U.S. division strength) and in material (235 helicopters and planes and 890 military vehicles destroyed or damaged) spells out clearly enough the tragic predicament that unit has landed in.

It goes without saying that under these circumstances the morale of its troops is sagging, and their combativeness and mobility is greatly affected. In an engagement on May 6, 1968, north of Saigon, its men threw away their weapons and ran away as soon as it came into contact with the people's forces. Even in the thick of the fight, whole units of its armoured cars turned tail at the sight of adverse anti-tank weapons. Many of its units preferred to fall back and let aircraft or artillery hammer at the P.L.A.F. line for hours before resuming their advance. It is not rare to see officers of that Division leave their post at night to come back only the following day by choppers.

Such a plight is not only the lot of Infantry Division 25 but also of other arms of the U.S. army such as Marines, Para, Air Cav. But, as its nickname indicates, Tropical Lightning *decidedly outshines the other U.S. arms in this regard.*

TO THE READER

We are aware that there is much room for improvement in the wording of our paper. We apologize for this shortcoming and highly appreciate all your suggestions as they will help us to serve you more efficiently in future.

TWENTY-THREE YEARS OF STRUGGLE...

(Continued from page 3)

people are carrying out production work and the fighting and receiving complementary education at a time. 656,000 of them are attending primary schools, 437,000 elementary schools and 53,000 secondary schools. The complementary education campaign has been making steady headway even in most heavily - raided areas and among combat units.

We are striving to enforce compulsory primary education for the labouring people, compulsory elementary education for Party members and grass-roots cadres, and compulsory secondary and higher education to other cadres.

AFTER 23 years of implementation of the Party and Government's policy on elimination of illiteracy and on complementary education, we have drawn the following experiences:

1 — Only when power is in the hands of the people and under the leadership of the working class can illiteracy be radically wiped out and, the people's cultural standard raised in a thorough fashion. The popularization of the national script was started as early as 1935 by patriotic-minded people who displayed a great zeal. Nevertheless, prior to the August 1945 Revolution only 6,000 people became literate whereas one year after that historical event, the total of literates soared to 2.5 million.

2 — We must bring home to everyone the significance of the elimination of illiteracy and that of complementary education and their objectives, task and role in the revolution. This is a basic link in the chain of the three revolutions now being carried out in the North: revolution in the relation of production, technical revolution, and ideological and cultural revolution. In a country like ours which has a poor and backward feudal agrarian economy and which advances directly to socialism, complementary education must take pride of place in general education for a long period of time and this must be made a sweeping drive. Only comprehension of the revolutionary character and the class spirit of this task can put the movement on the right track and bring teachers and learners full realization of the glory, responsibility and advantages involved in the task.

3 — The elimination of illiteracy and complementary education must be constantly and closely guided in co-ordination with production, the fighting and other tasks; they must be regularly coordinated with the activities of other branches and all sections of the people. Where and when this guidance is lax, the movement will recede. A strict guidance needs the constant attention of the Party's leadership and administrative cadres at all levels; organizers of classes must pay attention to the work among the students and map out plans for complementary education in co-ordination with plans for the training and fostering of cadres and workers. It is necessary to build up an army of qualified teachers and give them facilities for the improvement of their standard. It is also indispensable to devise various methods of learning appropriate to each kind of students and to local conditions. Classes on the job must be given priority while not slighting full-time schooling and part-time schooling.

4—Attention should be paid to pushing forward complementary education, to both giving solid foundations to the movement and improving its quality. The giving solid foundations to the movement is of paramount importance insofar as complementary education is an affair of the masses. Once the movement is set going, it is imperative to improve its quality so as to give the learners adequate cultural and technical knowledge. Without objectives suitable to the students, the movement is readily bound to fail. Those two aspects — giving solid foundations to the movement and improvement of its quality — are closely linked together and neither can be underestimated.

OVER the past 23 years, we have been continuously combating illiteracy and gradually improving the cultural standard of the cadres and the labouring people. In spite of the hardships of the past resistance to the French colonialists and the present struggle against U.S. aggression, our people placing boundless confidence in the lines of the Government and the Party, have been defying all difficulties to acquire the benefits of knowledge. They are carrying out production and the fighting, while learning to serve more effectively production and the fighting, contributing their share to the defence and the building of the country.

Military Operations

(Continued from page 8)

Gulf of Thailand), disrupting traffic on strategic Road No 12 (leading from Rach Gia to Saigon).

On the afternoon of Sept. 3, Liberation infantrymen in Tay Ninh ambushed another convoy of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division, 19 km east of the provincial capital. American initial reports put U.S. casualties at 35, and material losses at 2 armoured cars destroyed.

On the morning of Sept. 4, the P.L.A.F. of Saigon-Cholon violently engaged 2 puppet Ranger battalions on Highway No 4 (near Binh Chanh district town, 12 km South of Saigon). The Liberation fighters cut into the enemy formations and encircled them. The U.S. Command sent many helicopters to relieve the beleaguered troops. One of the choppers was downed on the spot. Fighting is still in progress.

Military Operations

THE South Viet Nam P.L.A.F. hit hard at the enemy on all battlefields from late August to Sept. 4, 1968 and won great victories. *Giai Phong* Press Agency reported.

In **Quang Nam** province, on Aug. 29, the Dai Loc district regional forces intercepted a U.S. company, killing 100 G.I.'s and capturing 5 heavy and light machineguns. Next day, in the same area, the P.L.A.F. depleted another U.S. company and wiped out one platoon. On the same day, in Dien Ban district, the P.L.A.F. put out of action 200 American soldiers and seized many weapons. Other G.I.'s called in as reinforcements took a sound beating: 260 more were killed or wounded, 30 weapons captured.

Altogether in 2 days, August 29 and 30, the P.L.A.F. wiped out 600 G.I.'s.

The same source disclosed that between Aug. 22 and Aug. 26 the P.L.A.F. in Quang Nam province and Da Nang city attacked 61 enemy bases and positions, wiping out 3,500 enemy troops, most of them puppet regular troops and cruel thugs, and inflicting heavy losses on 5 battalions. The P.L.A.F. also destroyed 70 military vehicles (mostly armoured cars) and damaged 4 airfields and 10 artillery emplacements.

In the same period, in **Central Trung Bo** (Central Viet Nam), the P.L.A.F. assaulted 200 enemy positions (in Da Nang and Qui Nhon cities, 9 urban centres and 21 district towns). They killed, wounded or captured more than 10,000 enemy troops (half of them Americans). Four enemy battalions were completely written off the muster-roll on Aug. 23 and 24. In addition, the P.L.A.F. destroyed or damaged 337 military vehicles (one third of them armoured cars) and shot down 57 aircraft of different types.

In Northern Quang Tri, on Aug. 31, U.S. troops deployed into the Dinh Huong—An Hoa sector, 3km North-East of Con Tien, were besieged by the P.L.A.F. and took 100 casualties. The day before, a U.S. company ran into a P.L.A.F. unit at Lang Cat (South-East of Khe Sanh, on Highway No 9) and lost 50 men killed and 2 choppers downed. Earlier, on Aug. 29, guerillas and regional troops had wiped out many adverse troops and set a tank ablaze in an engagement at Cam Lo.

In the **Southern part of Trung Bo**, the P.L.A.F. raided Chang Chang (2km North-West of Phan Thiet town, Binh Thuan province), wiping out 2 enemy companies, 250 troops, shooting down 2 aircraft and destroying 2 armoured cars.

In Ninh Thuan province, in a pre-dawn attack on Aug. 25 on a battalion of puppet Regiment 23 at Phuc Loc, South of Phan Rang town, the P.L.A.F. destroyed one company and inflicted heavy losses on another, claiming 100 enemy casualties.

IN **Tay Ninh** province, early on Aug. 27, elements of Brigade 3, U.S. 101st airborne division, landed by helicopters in Loc Hung village 4km South-West of Trang Bang, came under fire. After 40 minutes' fighting, the resourceful and courageous Liberation fighters completely wiped out 3 companies of this airborne brigade. At 23.30 hours, Aug. 31, the P.L.A.F. of Tay Ninh province launched a surprise attack on 2 U.S. Ranger companies based at Ben Soi (11km South-West of the provincial capital) and swiftly destroyed both companies, causing over 100 fatal casualties. This was the 2nd attack on U.S. Rangers at Ben Soi within 7 days, the first on the morning of Aug. 25 resulting in the destruction of 2 U.S. companies and the capture of a U.S. platoon of Rangers.

On the night of Aug. 31, the Tay Ninh P.L.A.F. also violently pounded the U.S. Trang Lon base camp and a U.S. Special Forces camp. The shelling took a heavy toll of lives and blasted down many barracks including a signal centre.

Between Saigon and the sea, from Aug. 20 to 30, the P.L.A.F. ambushed many enemy river convoys on the Long Tau river, sinking or setting ablaze 9 ships (including 6 with a displacement of 100,000 tons upward).

In the same province, on the night of Aug. 21, the P.L.A.F. pumped heavy gun fire into the Bien Hoa air base, destroying 14 aircraft (8 jets, giant C-130 transports and 3 *Skyraider* fighters). The 8 jets loaded with bombs received direct hits and exploded, killing 38 pilots (including 13 general officers). Another pre-dawn pounding of this same air base on Aug. 31 caused further losses to the enemy.

Meanwhile, on the night of Aug. 26, the P.L.A.F. of Vinh Long plastered the local airfield. After a barrage of artillery fire, Liberation infantrymen broke through the defence perimeter into the heart of the airfield, where they destroyed or damaged 34 aircraft, burned down many fuel and ammo dumps and killed more than 100 adverse soldiers. Early on Aug. 31, in Can Tho city, the P.L.A.F. shelled Tra Noc airfield, destroying 14 aircraft (including 7 H-34 helicopters and 3 L-19 recon planes).

Thus, in these 3 attacks on Bien Hoa, Can Tho and Vinh Long airfields, the P.L.A.F. destroyed or damaged 62 aircraft of different types and wiped out more than 100 enemy troops.

West and South of Saigon, on the night of Aug. 26, the P.L.A.F. struck hard at the enemy in Can Giuoc and Duc Hoa districts. In Duc Hoa, in a pre-dawn surprise attack on Aug. 27 on Battalion One, puppet Regiment 49, at Bau Ngan Hai, less than 20 km West of Saigon, the P.L.A.F. destroyed or decimated 2 companies of this battalion. In Can Giuoc, in the small hours of Aug. 28, the P.L.A.F. inflicted heavy losses on an intelligence company of Regiment 46, puppet Division 25, and on a "civil guard" company. At 1 a.m. Aug. 28, the P.L.A.F. engaged 2 battalions of the same puppet regiment deployed for a counter-attack, and wiped out 100 of their men.

FINALLY, early on Sept. 4, the P.L.A.F. poured heavy gun fire into enemy positions in Ben Trang city. The targets included the U.S. First Field Force H.Q. Heavy enemy losses were reported.

The P.L.A.F. also blew up a bridge North of Rach Gia provincial capital (on the

(*Continued page 7*)

PROVISIONAL PEOPLE'S LIBERATION COMMITTEE SET UP IN CA MAU PROVINCE

ON August 19, a Congress was held in Ca Mau to set up the Provisional People's Liberation Committee of the province, opening a new page in the local people's revolutionary cause, *Giai Phong* Press Agency reported.

The Congress eagerly discussed, and were unanimous to endorse the appraisal of the great achievements of the local armed forces and people in the building and consolidation of the liberated areas and in the establishment of revolutionary power. Since early Spring this year, along with the generalized attacks and uprisings, over 97 per cent of the electorate have zealously gone to the polls to choose People's Liberation Councils at various levels. In the elections all democratic principles and universal suffrage have been put into practice so that all eligible voters can freely choose their genuine representatives. So far revolutionary power has been set up in 35 out of a total of 46 villages and in 5 districts. 20 per cent of the members of village People's Liberation Committees are women. In a number of villages, Khmer and Chinese nationals have also their own representatives in the people's councils.

The Congress held that the process of building revolutionary power is at the same time a large-scale political agitation work which instills revolutionary spirit into thousands and thousands of people and bring them full realization of their position as masters of their own destiny. This will give a strong impetus to all branches of activity in serving the generalized attacks and uprisings and the building of an ever more solid and steadier liberated zone.

The Congress appointed a 9-member Provisional People's Liberation Committee for the province, which included one woman.

On U.S. Setbacks in Tay Ninh Region

Tropical Lightning Division's Tribulations in the Tropics

. . . *Road.*

. . . *Provincial capital.*

. . . *Infantry Division 25 main base.*

. . . *Infantry Division 25 setback.*

. . . *Main operation launched by Infantry Division 25.*

A general attack was launched by the P.L.A.F. on the night of August 17, 1968 against the enemy in Tay Ninh province, northwest of Saigon. At the end of the first week, the people's forces put out of action about 4,000 enemy soldiers including 300 G.I.s, and destroyed nearly 600 armoured cars and tanks and about 40 cannons and howitzers. In this debacle, U.S. Infantry Division 25 was the hardest hit. However, this was not the first setback it suffered in Viet Nam. Here are some other "achievements" to its "credit."

BAPTISM OF FIRE AT CU CHI

"TROPICAL LIGHTNING"—*nickname of that unfortunate division — was urgently sent to South Viet Nam after the failure of the first dry-season counter-offensive mounted by Westmoreland in Winter 1965-Spring 1966. The Pentagon wanted it to do the duty of a "fire brigade" which could fly to the rescue of beleaguered troops with the rapidity of lightning.*

Soon after its arrival, on January 8, 1966 the brigade in the lead (and Brigade) of Infantry Division 25 set up its H.Q. at Dong Du, 30km northwest of Saigon. Dong Du is located in Cu Chi, a district well known later on for the

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